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ABSTRACT

An attempt to increase individuals' sophistication in finding information about movies is made in this guide. Strategies to uncover reviews, criticism, biographies and other film data in the University of California at San Diego libraries are outlined. The first major section deals with approaches to the card catalog and suggests ways of getting information on film scripts, directors, and books about movies. The second half of the guide is concerned with approaches to indexes and reference books for access to reviews, film people, genres, the film industry, screen credits, and other material. (LB)

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FILM

a brief guide to research on movies and movie people

by

Phésus Smith

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F A D E I N . . . . .

In films, persistence of vision deludes you. Nothing really moves; one still frame after another flashes on the screen, and the mind interprets the consecutive images as motion.

Early audiences ducked when the train roared down the camera full speed ahead; today's audiences are too sophisticated to crawl under their seats, but the illusion of motion still works.

This guide is designed to increase your sophistication in finding information about movies. This is also a tricky process. It involves no optical illusions, but does require some persistence and resourcefulness, if the right effect is to be produced. A strategy to uncover reviews, criticism, biographies, and other film data in the UCSD libraries is outlined here.

One key resource, aside from the card catalogs and books noted below, is the reference staff. These librarians are adept at handling information needs and will gladly assist you in tracking down the data you need. The Central University Library (CUL) is located north of Matthews Campus: Cluster I Undergraduate Library (Cl-I) is on the second floor of the Humanities-Library Building on Revelle College. All books mentioned are in CUL: those also located in Cluster I are marked with an asterisk (*).

A P P R O A C H E S T O T H E C A T A L O G . . .

Try the card catalog first! If you are fortunate enough to find books discussing the film or director you are researching, it may be unnecessary to go to other sources.

Film scripts. Check the author-title catalog under the film title, director, and scenarist. More and more screenplays are being published, with two notable series already established: "Modern Film Scripts" (e.g., Belle de Jour) and "Classic Film Scripts" (e.g., Potemkin). The best editions of screenplays include critical prefaces and other commentary. 388 films and the printed sources for their scripts are listed in Clifford McCarty's Published Screenplays; a Checklist, Kent, Ohio, Kent State Univ. Pr., 1971 (Ref. Z 5784 M9 M3).

Directors. The subject catalog lists critical and biographical studies under the name of the director. Quality varies, but some (e.g., Peter Bogdanovich's John Ford) are excellent. A few studies of performers also shed light on the director's technique. Memoirs and autobiographies of directors and actors will be found listed in the author-title catalog.

Books about Movies. General books on film might help you in researching a specific movie or director; as background reading, they can be fun. The major heading in the subject catalog is not "Films," "Movies " or even "Motion Pictures," but

MOVING PICTURES.

Technique is partially covered by the heading

MOVING PICTURES--PRODUCTION AND DIRECTION.

Because the subject catalog provides only some clues to the contents of the books, you may also want to browse the shelves--most movie books are in the

PN 1993 - PN 1999

call number section. Check footnotes and bibliographies in the books you find for leads to other books and articles.

A P P R O A C H E S T O I N D E X E S
A N D R E F E R E N C E B O O K S . . .

Reviews. Get your hands on as many reviews as you can! Reviews vary greatly in length and quality, but, cumulatively, they often give a useful impression of the film and of the temper of the audience which greeted its release. If you are unsure of the year of release, consult Georges Sadoul's Dictionary of Films (*Ref. PN 1993.45 S3213); the latest International Motion Picture Almanac--"Feature Pictures, 1955" section (Ref. PN 1993.3 I55); or the index volume (vol. 6) of the New York Times Film Reviews, 1913-1968 (Ref. PN 1995 N4).

To find reviews and criticism, search the following sources (listed in order of greatest usefulness):

Ref.
PN
1995
N4

New York Times Film Reviews, 1913-1968. New York, 1970. 6 vols.

Five volumes of reviews originally appearing in the Times, plus an index. For reviews after 1968, go to the New York Times Index (*Ref. AI 21 N44) and check under "Motion Pictures--Reviews." The microfilm edition of the Times is in the Documents Dept. (CUL, 6th floor); current issues are shelved in the Newspaper Section on the 2nd (main) floor of CUL as well as in C1-I.

Ref.
PN
1993
F54

Filmfacts. 1958/

An ongoing, direct source for film credits, synopses, and extracts from reviews of feature films released in the U. S. In recent years, also includes useful critical summaries. Excellent, but appears late.

Ref.
Z
1035
A1
S3
v.4

Salem, James M.

A guide to critical reviews. Metuchen, N. J., Scarecrow Pr., 1966/

Vol. 4 (in two parts) lists citations to movie reviews compiled from Readers' Guide (see below), the New York Times, and Photoplay from 1927 through 1963.

*Ref
AI
3
R4

Readers' guide to periodical literature. 1900/

References to reviews of feature films are under the heading "Moving Picture Plays--Criticism, Plots, etc." Reviews of documentaries are listed under "Moving Pictures--Documentary Films."

A counterpart index for more scholarly magazines, Social Sciences and Humanities Index, 1907/ (*Ref. AI 3 S6) cites few reviews, although they are frequently long and analytical.

*Ref.
Z
5937
A78

Art index. 1929/
Notes reviews in film and art magazines. Look under the heading "Moving Picture Reviews."

*Ref.
AI
3
B75

British humanities index. 1915/
Especially useful for finding articles on movies produced in Great Britain. Look under the heading "Cinema" or under the director's name.

*Ref.
AI
3
E752

Essay and general literature index. 1900/
Indexes essays and criticism collected in books. Reviews are listed under "Moving-Pictures--Reviews" or under the director's name. A good place to look for citations to the collected reviews of Andrew Sarris and Judith Crist, whose reviews in the Village Voice and New York, respectively, are not generally indexed.

Ref.
ML
118
G8

Guide to the performing arts. 1957/
Annual index, usually a few years behind. Check under everything, as the indexing is whimsical.

Film People, Genres, and the Industry. As with most events, the participants often have the last (although not necessarily the most accurate) word. Interviews with stars, directors, cameramen, and other film people illuminate from within the creative aspects of making a film. Gossip, feuding, and trivia add to the interest.

Good sources for citations to interviews and articles on people connected with a movie are the indexes mentioned above. The three most valuable are the New York Times Index, Readers' Guide, and Art Index. Look under the names of people involved in the making of the film. In Readers' Guide and Art Index, also check under "Moving Picture Plays--Production and Direction." International Film Guide (see below) features articles on five directors each year; the 1972 edition includes Bertolucci

and Rohmer. Biography Index, 1946- (*Ref. Z 5301 B5) lists articles and books containing material on film personalities. An index to interviews with directors is being prepared in the CUL Reference Dept.

Articles on the motion picture industry are noted in most of the indexes; the New York Times Index, Readers' Guide, and Art Index are probably the best bets. In the latter two, check under "Moving Picture Industry" and "Moving Pictures--[country]."

To find articles on a particular genre or technique, Readers' Guide and Art Index are the most useful indexes. The heading "Moving Picture Plays" has subheadings for genres (e.g., "--Horror Films," "--Political Films) and for techniques (e.g., "--Focusing," "--Sound Effects"). The other indexes are less useful, but British Humanities Index and Essay and General Literature Index pay off on occasion.

Screen Credits, Facts, and Data. The following reference books contain other pertinent information on films, actors, directors, and the industry:

*Ref
PN
1993.45
H3
1970b
Halliwell, Leslie.
The filmgoer's companion. 3d ed.
London, MacGibbon & Kee, 1970.
A dictionary of film. Brief information on performers, directors, and notable movies.

*Ref
PN
1993.45
S313
Sadoul, Georges.
Dictionary of film makers. Berkeley,
Univ. of California Pr., 1972.
Concise critical commentaries on 1000 directors, scriptwriters cinematographers, composers, producers, etc.. Lists films in which the individuals participated; those discussed in the following source are starred.

*Ref
PN
1993.45
S3213
Sadoul, Georges.
Dictionary of films. Berkeley,
Univ. of California Pr., 1972.
Pithy evaluations of more than 1200 important movies.

Ref
PN
1993.3
I55
International motion picture almanac.
1956/
Vital data on the industry (producers, distributors, organizations, etc.). Includes a lengthy "Who's who" of the film world.

Ref.
PN
1993.5
U6
M53

Michael, Paul.
The American movies reference book; the sound era. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1969.
Gives fairly detailed credits for a representative selection of players, films, directors, and producers. Lists major awards. Excellent stills.

Ref.
PN
1993.3
D3

Screen world. 1949/
Annual record of films released in the U. S. Main values: credits, stills, and an obituary section.

Ref.
PN
1998
A2
F5

Filmlexicon degli autori e delle opere.
Roma, Bianco e Nero. 1958-1967. 7 vols.
Excellent, scholarly encyclopedia of motion pictures. In Italian, but bibliographies often include references in English. Sumptuously illustrated.

Ref.
PN
1993.3
I544

International film guide. 1964/
Best coverage of the worldwide film scene. Each annual volume surveys national outputs and markets and highlights trend setters.

*Ref.
Z
5784
M9
G66

Gottesman, Ronald.
Guidebook to film. New York, Holt, 1972.
"An 11-in-one reference." Sections include: Books and periodicals; museums and archives; film schools; supplies; distributors; sources for stills; organizations; festivals; awards; terminology.

Like a "preview of coming attractions," the foregoing only suggests what will play well when the feature is screened. May your research lead to "critical and popular success"--and some fun as well.

F A D E O U T . . . . .